

VERNON MYERS
MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

MARY LAWSON BROWN
VICE MAYOR - COMMISSIONER

ALLEGRA KITCHENS
COMMISSIONER

PHIL LEARY
COMMISSIONER

JAMES NORWOOD, JR.
COMMISSIONER



ELWIN C. "WOODY" BOYNTON, JR.
CITY MANAGER

BETSY JORDAN DRIGGERS
CITY CLERK

MATTHEW D. REYNOLDS
FINANCE DIRECTOR

GARY S. GETCHELL
CHIEF OF POLICE

MICHAEL LAMBERT
CHIEF FIRE DEPT.

DONALD E. HOLMES
CITY ATTORNEY

Regular meeting 2nd and 4th Thursdays each month at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES
CITY OF PALATKA
COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY
April 12, 2012; 4:00 p.m.

Proceedings of a regular meeting of the City of Palatka, Florida Community Redevelopment Agency held on the 12th day of April, 2012.

PRESENT:

Vernon Myers	Mayor
Mary Lawson Brown	Commissioner
Allegra Kitchens	Commissioner
Phil Leary	Commissioner
James Norwood, Jr.	Commissioner
Angela Murtagh	President, Downtown Palatka, Inc.

ABSENT: Chip Laibl Commissioner, BOCC

Also Present: City Manager Elwin C. Boynton, Jr.; City Attorney Don Holmes; City Clerk Betsy Jordan Driggers; Finance Director Matthew Reynolds; Police Chief Gary Getchell; Fire Chief Mike Lambert; Planning Director Thad Crowe; Main Street Manager Charles Rudd

CALL TO ORDER – Mayor Myers called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

INVOCATION - Chief Gary Getchell

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – As a group

RESIGNATION - Mayor Myers read a letter of resignation from County Commissioner Chip Laibl. Commissioner Norwood moved to accept Commissioner Laibl's resignation from the Palatka Community Redevelopment Agency. Commissioner Kitchens seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

- 1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – 2/9/12 – Commissioner Norwood moved to adopt the minutes as read. Mrs. Murtagh seconded the motion, which, passed
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – There were none.
- 3. CRA EXTENSION** – Consider a Recommendation to the Palatka City Commission to Adopt a Resolution of the City of Palatka, Florida, Extending the Community Redevelopment Area Plan

to December 27, 2043 – Lara Diettrich, Diettrich Planning, Agent, 1332 Avondale Avenue, Jacksonville, FL, said this is being presented to the CRA after extensive work with the County, TIF districts, citizens and different organizations. They are presenting a resolution to extend the CRA, which is comprised of the three TIF districts, for an additional 30 years. Statutes allow one extension of 30 years past the original 30 years. Page one runs through the creation and structure of the CRA, page 2 resolves to extend the resolution. The CRA will decide whether to make a recommendation to the Commission. The resolution will be considered by the Commission on May 10. It has been noticed to all taxing districts.

Commissioner Norwood asked if they should have a 30-year plan, because they are going to extend this Plan. There are certain projects they'd like to see come to fruition, and they know they will have a certain amount of funds available. This needs to be fluid. There are on-going programs. All these should be comprised within a Plan. The CRA needs a Plan to operate by. Commissioner Kitchens said they adopted a CRA Plan last year. Commissioner Leary said the Plan is that plan and the Comprehensive Plan, which outlines goals, objectives and policies. Ms. Murtagh said they are also working on a Master Plan. Mayor Myers said they have plans for Plans on top of Plans. They have a framework set up and this is fluid. They do a regular review of what is going on within the Plan. Commissioner Brown said they need to go ahead and move on this. They have enough plans. Mr. Holmes said the CRA plan is 135 pages in length and is updated from time to time, and sets forth in general terms the plans for the three districts within the CRA. This is complimented by the Comprehensive Plan. They have a broad framework, but it is flexible enough to fill in details as they go along. They can alter this if some of the goals and objectives need to be altered. It's a substantial document. Commissioner Norwood said they've talked about making the CBD a historic district and they need to incorporate that into the Plan. Mr. Boynton said they've talked about a lot of capital improvements projects and he discussed this with Commissioner Norwood. There are a lot of potential projects. He wants to know what sort of budgets they are looking at. They Plan will allow them to accomplish anything they need to do; he wants to know what will be accomplished during a certain time frame. Each year they identify needs, and in December they allocate money to accomplish those needs. Each year there is a different focus. The flexibility is there. The reason they did a complete re-write of the CRA Plan is because they were constantly amending the Plan to allow for projects. This is a well-written and flexible document now.

Ms. Diettrich said she concurs on what's been said and especially Mr. Boynton's comments. The Plan does include a historical component. Because the plan is so comprehensive, there are a lot of things can take place, and many businesses and residents have changed since 2009. They have talked about doing a workshop on the Plan to refresh peoples' memories on what the Plan involved. They've changed the title from 'Needs Assessment Report', and it now reads as the "Community Redevelopment Plan," This should be changed on the Website.

Commissioner Brown moved to recommend to the City Commission the adoption of a resolution extending the CRA Plan until December 27, 2043. Commissioner Leary seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

4. **CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT:**

RECRUITMENT FUND – Charles Rudd, Main Street Manager, said this is a tool they want to use to address a need that became apparent when recruiting Beef O'Brady's. This was a time sensitive project, and if it was more time-sensitive the "machine" would have moved too slowly to bring this to fruition. This brings some guidelines and limits to a plan to bring these issues to a committee to recommend approve of funds in order to act quickly on an opportunity to recruit a business. A copy of the "goals and objectives' page was distributed (filed).

Commissioner Brown said they need to keep in mind that they need to save existing businesses as well as attract new ones. The folks who have been here for years also need some help staying in Downtown. Commissioner Kitchens asked if they can change the name to “retain and recruit” fund. Commissioner Leary said anyone can come to the CRA and get a grant for an existing business. Mr. Rudd said if they need to keep a business in town by expanding or moving they can use this. Mr. Holmes clarified that an application will be submitted, a committee will review the application and a recommendation will be made to the CRA, which could be called to meet on an emergency basis.

Ms. Murtagh asked what they are considering furniture and fixtures, regarding the 50% match. Mr. Rudd said things that are considered immovable objects; this is just like the BIG program. These are fixtures. Commissioner Leary moved to adopt the Recruitment Fund. Ms. Murtagh seconded the motion. Mr. Boynton said they will fund this; there has been no money set aside for this yet. If they see a need to fund it, they will. If an application came in, they can set money aside for it from contingency. There being no further discussion, the motion was voted upon and passed unopposed.

REQUEST TO ALLOCATE FUNDS – up to \$55,000 for BIG Grant for the Old McCrory's Building - Ruth Burk, owner, 510 Mulholland Park, Palatka, introduced the prospective renter, Traci Hutcherson, 5504 Cypress Link Blvd, Elkton, 32033, who distributed a handout (filed). She spoke about coronary heart disease and the prevalence of this in the US. She provided health and financial statistics for the adverse affect of a sedentary lifestyle. Her proposed Hollywood Athletic Club is not a normal health facility. It takes them from health care to a health club. It helps with wellness and fitness and improves quality of life. They will focus on disease management and education. Exercise is medicine. Humans were built to move. They focus on lifestyle changes to improve quality of life. They will introduce innovative programs to certain focus groups. They will also provide streaming online programs and classes. Their hours will be 5 am to 11 pm. They will do blood pressure checks. Ms. Murtagh asked their time frame on opening. Hutchinson said they will open as soon as construction is completed.

Mr. Boynton said the grant is to upgrade the restrooms and HVAC in order to open the facility. This is an approximately 10,000 square foot facility on the first floor. It has not been occupied for some time. He wanted some criteria to allow Mrs. Burk to move forward with this prior to funding. They need to make a judgment call on this without opening the door for numerous requests. An application process is now out there and he believes she has met the criteria within the application. The request was for \$55,000, but the Recruitment Fund was a \$50,000 match. If they have a guideline document, they need to follow it. This levels the playing field for any proposal that will come before them. He's used the Recruitment Fund as the guideline for this application. The review board can review this and they can then hold a special meeting to either approve or disapprove this. Mrs. Burke has been working with Mrs. Hutchinson for around 3 months to get this building opened. They don't perceive any significant barrier to opening this building besides these items. The work has been done and scrutinized by the building official. The application in front of them is complete. This is the first application of this nature the Board has seen. This will set a precedent. If they want to run through the Recruitment Fund process, they can do so. This may take another week or two. He believes Mrs. Burk has met the minimum criteria.

Mr. Holmes said the item was agendaed as a BIG grant. Mr. Boynton said this was intended to fall underneath the Recruitment Fund program. The BIG grant was not funded again. Mr. Holmes said they've just approved the Recruitment Fund program. In looking at the criteria and

grant requirements, the application should go through the selection committee, which then makes a recommendation to the CRA. Mr. Boynton said he recommends they go through the recruitment process to minimize out-of-program requests. Mrs. Burk said she'd rather the CRA board look at this. She asked who will be on the committee. Mrs. Murtagh said the McCrory's building is the largest retail building downtown. They need to do something immediately to open that building up. If that building was ready for a tenant they would not be having this conversation. They need to go ahead and take care of this building. Mayor Myers said they are not disputing that; the issue is they need to do this legally. Mr. Holmes said they've just established the program to fund the request, but the program specifically contemplates a different process. They can't use the program if they don't use the process. If this is applied for under recruitment, then they have to follow that procedure. Mr. Boynton asked if they can take this on its own merit. Mr. Holmes said they've just established a process for a recruitment program and the committee works with the applicant to see that the criteria are met. He is not aware if the applicant is aware of or has agreed to the criteria, as in repayment and matching funds. The selection committee would be sure she knew the conditions of the grant. Mr. Boynton asked, barring the recruitment fund criteria, if it is acceptable for the application to be considered on its own merit, without it falling under any program, and can the CRA legally do that. Commissioner Leary said he thought that's exactly what they were doing. Based upon his background, he believes it is a good business plan and the building is a key domino in downtown revitalization. He thinks the CRA can recommend approval on this. Mr. Holmes said they need to have established criteria to apply to the request. The other grant programs had criteria in place that they applied consistently to each application. He's not aware of any instance of just giving out money or grants on a random basis if it was not in connection with some program. His concern is not with the worthiness of the project, but with the randomness of the request. Theoretically, if the program is contemplated within the plan and is within the district, the basics of the plan are met. They are opening up the door to other requests of a similar nature. Mr. Boynton said money can be transferred to the BIG grant and is capped at \$30,000, and that is a competitive grant that has to be opened up to the public. There is now a Recruitment Fund, and this application meets most of that criteria. The committee hasn't had a chance to look at that.

Mr. Holmes read #8 criterion, which says if the owner transfers, sells or divests themselves of the property or the business, or fails to make the improvements, the grant funds shall be returned. This is a tad ambiguous. The business is the building; if Mrs. Burk sells the building within 5 years she may have to repay some of the money. If the business fails, that doesn't trigger repayment of the funds. Mrs. Burke said the renter is qualified to take Medicare/Medicaid payments. She is subsidizing this rent. Mayor Myers said they are supportive of the project; they just need to work through the legalization of the process. Mr. Boynton said he needs her to fill out a two page program. The committee will be the Main Street Board Chairman, the Mayor and himself. That recommendation would then come back to the CRA to move forward on the CRA. They can hold another CRA meeting in two weeks. He stated in his memo that this request is for \$55,580. The recruitment grant maxes out at \$50,000. He wants the Commission to understand that the most they can award is \$50,000. They may want to revisit the Recruitment Fund and raise that limit if they want to consider granting the entire amount of the request. This will create two full-time jobs, which is part of the major criteria. Commissioner Norwood said they need to go through the committee recommendation so they don't open themselves up for other individual to come straight to the CRA without going through a process. He'd rather act upon a recommendation. Commissioner Kitchens asked if she will be able to open this facility with \$50,000. Mrs. Burke said she's come way down on her request. Mayor Myers said they will assist her on filling out the application. Mrs. Burk said she will go through the Recruitment Fund process.

REQUEST TO ALLOCATE FUNDS – up to \$13,000 for a Riverfront Mixed Martial Arts Event – TJ Smith, Beef O'Brady's, Promoter – Mr. Boynton said this item has been pulled from the Agenda.

5. **SOUTH HISTORIC DISTRICT:**

SHNA UPDATE – Mike Gagnon, 703 Emmett Street, Palatka, said they have a bank balance of around \$187,000. The Home Improvement Program has slowed down some as they are adapting the program to new needs. They will rewrite or amend the program in June. The signage project is underway. They have no applicants for the Live Here Work Here program. SHNA is working with the Larimer Arts Center to start murals for children on the east side of Hammock Hall.

REQUEST TO ALLOCATE FUNDS - \$5,000 for Hammock Hall Kitchen Remodel – Mike Gagnon said they need to remodel the kitchen; the sink was donated and it is very high and inaccessible. They also want to finish the cabinets. They will keep this under \$5,000. Commissioner Norwood moved to approve allocation of up to \$5,000.00 for the Hammock Hall kitchen renovations. Commissioner Kitchens seconded the motion, which passed unopposed.

6. **OTHER BUSINESS/REPORTS**

FINANCIAL UPDATE - CRA Director – Mr. Boynton said he included a report (filed) which is an update of all balances for the three TIF districts. The balances are trending as proposed during the annual allocation report. They are under budget on some items. There are adequate funds to take care of Mrs. Burk's request. There is a complete overview of all building and façade grant expenditures since 2010. As to promotions undertaken since February for the 3rd Friday Street Party and Cruise Ins, those are trending just under budget. Cruise-ins are well attended. Street parties have been rained out, and the last was on the opening night of the fair. Attendance was down. They hope attendance spikes with good weather. If attendance doesn't pick up this month, he asks they pull this back to one block with one band, from two blocks with two bands.

Commissioner Kitchens asked what the side street loops are. Mr. Boynton said this was the result of a red light study. These are the traffic light timers.

Commissioner Norwood asked where they are with the stormwater project. Mr. Boynton said they completed phase I a year ago and they are awaiting approval from FEMA on phase II. He is in touch with FEMA on this. It has been permitted and is ready to go. The project is a 75/25% project and will cost around \$125,000.

7. **ADJOURN** – There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m. upon a motion by Commissioner Kitchens and seconded by Commissioner Brown.

ANY PERSON WISHING TO APPEAL ANY DECISION MADE BY THE COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO ANY MATTER CONSIDERED AT SUCH MEETING WILL NEED A RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS, AND FOR SUCH PURPOSE MAY NEED TO INSURE THAT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS IS MADE, WHICH RECORD INCLUDES THE TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE APPEAL IS TO BE BASED. FS 286.105